

The Person and the Challenges
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Conference on catechetical work, Thursday, September 13, 2012, Prague, Czech Republic

The Czech Bishops' Conference and the Catholic Theological Faculty of the Charles University organized a conference on September 13, 2012, in Prague, Czech Republic, for those who work in the catechetical centres and for the experts in the field of catechesis.

The guest speakers arrived from Poland within the Erasmus exchange program – prof. Elżbieta Osewska from The Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, Poland, and prof. Józef Stala from Pontifical University of John Paul II in Cracow, Poland.

In the morning, the session concentrated on rather theoretical approaches to the issue in two areas.

The first topic was Upbringing and Education in the Post-modern period. Its aim was to show the threats and challenges sourcing from the post-modern culture, as well as to help to look for new models of religious education and upbringing in the post-modern context. After an introduction of the post-modern period and culture, the key challenges and risks of this period were shown, including the chances in the quest for new methods in upbringing and education.

The second topic handled with the opportunities of Powerful Learning Environment in the post-modern context of Europe. After a brief introduction there was discussed the new context for learning as well as the importance of a family as a powerful learning environment, which then encourages the search for new powerful learning environments.

In the afternoon, the aim was to employ the theory into practice; concretely, as how to prepare a good textbook of religious education and catechesis. Also, to the question what are the main preconditions for the preparation of a good textbook and to give an overview of the current textbooks for religious

education and catechesis in Poland. Further, there was considered what might be the expectations of a child or a young person from such textbooks and at what case a textbook becomes interesting for students. At the end, an overview and examples of current textbooks were given.

This part of the afternoon continued with reflections of the previous lectures and also with information and discussion of the new 4-year project on the concept of catechesis in the Czech Republic that is being prepared.

The conference brought many new impulses, as both the content and the shared practical experiences showed an enriching source of inspiration for the current Czech situation. The issues, that were very effectively and accessibly presented, raised a vivid discussion and they showed the complexity of the problem in which the Czech catechetical workers can learn from the Polish experience.

The conference took place just one day after the regular session of the Catechetical sub-commission of the Czech Bishops' Conference that among other things discussed the new project on the concept of catechesis, thus this conference discussion contributed to new inspiring and thought-provoking ideas.